

integrated hinge extending from said first and second tightening links, said second spring link comprises an integrated hinge extending from said first and second tightening links and intersecting said first spring link;

wherein said first spring link and said second spring link are secured at said intersection with an interconnect means;

REMARKS

Formal Matters

Applicant submits that the present amendment is fully responsive to the Office Action dated August 25, 2004 and, thus, the application is in condition for allowance. Claims 1-19 were examined. Claims 1-3, 5-7, and 9-19 were rejected. Claims 4 and 8 were objected to as being dependent upon rejected base claims.

By this reply, claims 1-3, 5-7, 9-19 are canceled, claims 4 and 8 are amended, and claim 20 is newly added. Claims 4, 8 and 20 remain pending. Of these, claims 4, 8, and 20 are independent. An expedited review and allowance of the application is respectfully requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 101

The Office has rejected claims 1-8, 10-11 under 35 U.S.C. § 101, as being inoperative therefore lacking utility.

In response, claims 4 and 8 have been amended to clarify the subject matter, claim 20 has been added, and claims 1-3, 5-7, and 9-19 have been canceled.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 101.

Double Patenting

The Office has provisionally rejected claims 1, 2, 5, and 6 under doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting over claims 1, 6, 7, 9-11 of copending Application No. 10/188,907. To expedite the prosecution of this patent application, the claims in question have been canceled and so the rejection is deemed moot. However, Applicant retains the right to pursue them in subsequent applications. To the extent that the rejection or line of argument is deemed applicable to the present claims or future claims, they are respectfully traversed.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Office has rejected claims 1, 2, 5-6 as allegedly being unpatentable over Cote (305,573). To expedite the prosecution of this patent application, the claims in question have been canceled and so the rejection is deemed moot. However, Applicant retains the right to pursue them in subsequent applications. To the extent that the rejection or line of argument is deemed applicable to the present claims or future claims, they are respectfully traversed.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Office has rejected claims 1-3, 5-7, 9-19 as allegedly being unpatentable over Bullock (2,195,024) in view of Davis (4,408,600) and Kelly (1,202,851). The Office has rejected claim 18 as allegedly being unpatentable over Bullock in view of Davis, Kelly, and further in view of Greenfield (5,261,871). The Office has rejected claims 1, 2, 5 as allegedly being unpatentable over Kelly. The Office has rejected claims 1, 2, 5, 6 allegedly being unpatentable over Davis. To expedite the prosecution of this patent application, the claims in question have been canceled and so the rejection is deemed moot. However, Applicant retains

the right to pursue them in subsequent applications. To the extent that the rejection or line of argument is deemed applicable to the present claims or future claims, they are respectfully traversed.

CONCLUSION


Applicants have, by way of the amendments and remarks presented herein, made a sincere effort to overcome rejections and address all issues that were raised in the outstanding Office Action. Accordingly, reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested. If it is determined that a telephone conversation would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

In the unlikely event that the transmittal letter is separated from this document and the Patent Office determines that additional extensions and/or other relief is required, Applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Assistant Commissioner to notify the undersigned as to the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document so such fees can be promptly.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: February 24, 2005

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